

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing data collected from **Chase Pond, Wilmot**, the program coordinators have made the following observations and recommendations.

We congratulate your group for sampling your pond **once** this summer. However, we strongly encourage your monitoring group to sample **additional** times each summer. Typically, we recommend that monitoring groups sample **three times** per summer (once in **June, July**, and **August**). We understand that the number of sampling events you decide to conduct per summer will depend upon volunteer availability, and your monitoring group's goals and funding availability. However, with a limited amount of data it is difficult to determine accurate and representative water quality trends. Since weather patterns and activity in the watershed can change throughout the summer, from year to year, and even from hour to hour during a rain event, it is a good idea to sample the pond at least once per month during the summer.

If you are having difficulty finding volunteers to help sample or to travel to one of the laboratories, please call the VLAP Coordinator and DES will help you work out an arrangement.

If your monitoring group's sampling events this year were limited due to not having enough time to pick-up or drop-off samples at the Limnology Center in Concord, please remember the Colby Sawyer College Water Quality Laboratory is open in New London. This laboratory was established to serve the large number of lakes/ponds in the greater Lake Sunapee region of the state. This laboratory is inspected by DES and operates under a DES approved quality assurance plan. We encourage your monitoring group to utilize this laboratory next summer for all sampling events, except for the annual DES biologist visit. To find out more about the Colby Sawyer College Water Quality Laboratory, and/or to schedule dates to pick up bottles and equipment, please call Bonnie Lewis, laboratory manager, at (603) 526-3486.

FIGURE INTERPRETATION

CHLOROPHYLL-A

- **Figure 1 and Table 1:** Figure 1 in Appendix A depicts the historical and current year chlorophyll-a concentration in the water column. Table 1 in Appendix B lists the minimum, maximum, and mean concentration for each year that the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

Chlorophyll-a, a pigment found in plants, is an indicator of the algal abundance. Algae (also known as phytoplankton) are typically microscopic, chlorophyll producing plants that naturally occur in lake ecosystems. The chlorophyll-a concentration measured in the water gives biologists an estimation of the algal concentration or lake productivity. **The median summer chlorophyll-a concentration for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 4.58 mg/m³.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the chlorophyll-a concentration was **2.21 mg/m³** in **August**.

The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the **2010** chlorophyll-a mean is ***much less than*** the state and similar lake medians, and was the lowest mean chlorophyll-a concentration since monitoring began! For more information on the similar lake median, refer to Appendix F.

Overall, the statistical analysis of the historical data shows that the chlorophyll-a concentration has ***significantly decreased*** (meaning ***improved***) on average ***by approximately 3.96 percent*** per year during the sampling period **1988 to 2010**. Please refer to Appendix E for the detailed statistical analysis explanation and data print-out. We hope this improving trend continues!

While algae are naturally present in all lakes and ponds, an excessive or increasing amount of any type is not welcomed. In freshwater lakes and ponds, phosphorus is the nutrient that algae typically depend upon for growth in New Hampshire lakes. Algal concentrations may increase as nonpoint sources of phosphorus from the watershed increase, or as in-lake phosphorus sources increase. Therefore, it is extremely important for volunteer monitors to continually educate all watershed residents about management practices that can be implemented to minimize phosphorus loading to surface waters.

TRANSPARENCY

- **Figure 2 and Tables 3a and 3b:** Figure 2 in Appendix A shows the historical and current year data for transparency with and without the use of a viewscope. Table 3a in Appendix B lists the minimum, maximum and mean transparency data without the use of a viewscope and Table 3b lists the minimum, maximum and mean transparency data with the use of a viewscope for each year that the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

Volunteer monitors use the Secchi disk, a 20 cm disk with alternating black and white quadrants, to measure how far a person can see into the water. Transparency, a measure of water clarity, can be affected by the amount of algae and sediment in the water, as well as the natural lake color of the water. **The median summer transparency for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 3.2 meters.**

The current year data (the top graph) show that the non-viewscope in-lake transparency was **2.9 meters** in **August**, and the Secchi disk was visible on the pond bottom.

The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the **2010** mean non-viewscope transparency is ***slightly less than*** the state median and is ***slightly greater than*** the similar lake median. Please refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median.

The current year data (the top graph) show that the viewscope in-lake transparency was ***slightly greater than*** the non-viewscope transparency on the **August** sampling event, and the Secchi disk was visible on the pond bottom. A comparison of transparency readings taken with and without the use of a viewscope shows that the viewscope typically increases the depth to which the Secchi disk can be seen into the lake, particularly on sunny and windy days. We recommend that your group measure Secchi disk transparency with and without the viewscope on each sampling event.

It is important to note that viewscope transparency data are not compared to a New Hampshire median or similar lake median. This is because lake transparency with the use of a viewscope has not been historically measured by DES. At some point in the future, the New Hampshire and similar lake medians for viewscope transparency will be calculated and added to the appropriate graphs.

Overall, the statistical analysis of the historical data (the bottom graph) shows that the mean annual in-lake non-viewscope transparency has ***not significantly changed*** (either *increased* or *decreased*) since monitoring began. Specifically, the in-lake transparency has remained ***relatively stable, ranging between***

approximately 2.2 and 4.0 meters since **1988**, and appears to be largely influenced by the pond water level. Please refer to Appendix E for the statistical analysis explanation and data print-out.

Typically, high intensity rainfall causes sediment-laden stormwater runoff to flow into surface waters, thus increasing turbidity and decreasing clarity. Efforts to stabilize stream banks, lake and pond shorelines, disturbed soils within the watershed, and especially dirt roads located immediately adjacent to the edge of tributaries and the lake or pond should continue on an annual basis. Guides to best management practices that can be implemented to reduce, and possibly even eliminate, non-point source pollutants, are available from DES upon request.

TOTAL PHOSPHORUS

- **Figure 3 and Table 8:** The graphs in Figure 3 in Appendix A show the amount of epilimnetic (upper layer) phosphorus and hypolimnetic (lower layer) phosphorus; the inset graphs show current year data. Table 8 in Appendix B lists the annual minimum, maximum, and median concentration for each deep spot layer and each tributary since the pond has been sampled through VLAP.

Phosphorus is typically the limiting nutrient for vascular aquatic plant and algae growth in New Hampshire's lakes and ponds. Excessive phosphorus in a lake or pond can lead to increased plant and algal growth over time. **The median summer total phosphorus concentration in the epilimnion (upper layer) of New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 12 ug/L. The median summer phosphorus concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer) is 14 ug/L.**

The current year data for the epilimnion (the top inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration was **9.3 ug/L** in **August**.

The historical data show that the **2010** mean epilimnetic phosphorus concentration is ***less than*** the state and similar lake medians. Refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median.

The current year data for the hypolimnion (the bottom inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration was **8.6 ug/L** in **August**.

The historical data show that the **2010** mean hypolimnetic phosphorus concentration is ***much less than*** the state and similar lake medians. Please refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median.

Overall, the statistical analysis of the historical data shows that the epilimnetic (upper layer) and hypolimnetic (lower layer) phosphorus concentration has **not significantly changed** since monitoring began. Specifically, the mean annual epilimnetic phosphorus concentration has **fluctuated between approximately 6 and 20 ug/L**, and the mean annual hypolimnetic phosphorus concentration has **fluctuated between approximately 8 and 30 ug/L** since **1988**. Please refer to Appendix E for the detailed statistical analysis explanation and data print-out.

One of the most important approaches to reducing phosphorus loading to a waterbody is to continually educate watershed residents about the watershed sources of phosphorus and how excessive phosphorus loading can negatively impact the ecology and the recreational, economical, and ecological value of lakes and ponds.

TABLE INTERPRETATION

➤ **Table 2: Phytoplankton**

Table 2 in Appendix B lists the current and historical phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the pond. Specifically, this table lists the three most dominant phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the sample and their relative abundance in the sample.

The dominant phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the **August** sample were ***Chrysosphaerella* (Golden-Brown)**, ***Melosira* (Diatom)**, and ***Staurastrum* (Green)**.

Phytoplankton populations undergo a natural succession during the growing season. Please refer to the “Biological Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation regarding seasonal plankton succession. Diatoms and golden-brown algae populations are typical in New Hampshire’s less productive lakes and ponds.

➤ **Table 4: pH**

Table 4 in Appendix B presents the in-lake and tributary current year and historical pH data.

pH is measured on a logarithmic scale of 0 (acidic) to 14 (basic). pH is important to the survival and reproduction of fish and other aquatic life. A pH below 6.0 typically limits the growth and reproduction of fish. A pH between 6.0 and 7.0 is ideal for fish. The median pH value for the epilimnion (upper layer) in New Hampshire’s

lakes and ponds is **6.6**, which indicates that the state surface waters are slightly acidic. For a more detailed explanation regarding pH, please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report.

The mean pH at the deep spot this year ranged from **7.16** in the hypolimnion to **7.21** in the epilimnion, which means that the water is ***slightly basic***.

➤ **Table 5: Acid Neutralizing Capacity**

Table 5 in Appendix B presents the current year and historical epilimnetic ANC for each year the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

Buffering capacity (ANC) describes the ability of a solution to resist changes in pH by neutralizing the acidic input. The median ANC value for New Hampshire’s lakes and ponds is **4.8 mg/L**, which indicates that many lakes and ponds in the state are at least “moderately vulnerable” to acidic inputs. For a more detailed explanation about ANC, please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report.

The mean acid neutralizing capacity (ANC) of the epilimnion (upper layer) was **10.4 mg/L**, which is ***greater than*** the state median. In addition, this indicates that the pond has a ***low vulnerability*** to acidic inputs.

➤ **Table 6: Conductivity**

Table 6 in Appendix B presents the current and historical conductivity values for tributaries and in-lake data. Conductivity is the numerical expression of the ability of water to carry an electric current, which is determined by the number of negatively charged ions from metals, salts, and minerals in the water column. The median conductivity value for New Hampshire’s lakes and ponds is **40.0 uMhos/cm**. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report.

The mean annual epilimnetic conductivity at the deep spot this year was **77.3 uMhos/cm**, which is ***greater than*** the state median.

The conductivity has ***fluctuated*** in the pond and tributaries since monitoring began. In addition, the in-lake conductivity is ***slightly greater than*** the state median. Typically, elevated conductivity indicates the influence of pollutant sources associated with human activities. These sources include failed or marginally functioning

septic systems, agricultural runoff, stormwater runoff, and road runoff which can contain road salt during the spring snow-melt. New development in the watershed can alter runoff patterns and expose new soil and bedrock areas, which could also contribute to increasing conductivity. In addition, natural sources, such as iron and manganese deposits in bedrock, can influence conductivity.

We recommend that your monitoring group conduct stream surveys and rain event sampling along tributaries with **elevated** conductivity to help identify the sources.

For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event sampling and stream surveys, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report special topic article, which is posted on the VLAP website at <http://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/vlap/categories/publications.htm>, or contact the VLAP Coordinator.

It is possible that de-icing materials applied to nearby roadways during the winter months may be influencing the conductivity in the pond. In New Hampshire, the most commonly used de-icing material is salt (sodium chloride).

Therefore, we recommend that the **epilimnion** (upper layer) be sampled for chloride next year. This additional sampling may help us identify what areas of the watershed are contributing to the increasing in-lake conductivity.

Please note that the DES Limnology Center in Concord is able to conduct chloride analyses, free of charge. As a reminder, it is best to conduct chloride sampling in the spring as the snow is melting and during rain events.

➤ **Table 8: Total Phosphorus**

Table 8 in Appendix B presents the current year and historical total phosphorus data for in-lake and tributary stations. Phosphorus is the nutrient that limits the ability of algae and aquatic plants to grow and reproduce. Please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The phosphorus concentration in the **tributaries** was **low** this year, which is good news. However, we recommend that your monitoring group sample the major tributaries to the pond during snow-melt and periodically during rainstorms to determine if the phosphorus concentration is **elevated** in the tributaries during these times. Typically, the majority of nutrient loading to a pond occurs in the spring during snow-melt and during intense rainstorms that cause soil erosion and surface runoff and within the watershed.

Due to the lack of rainfall in 2010, many waterbodies experienced lower phosphorus concentrations as a result of decreased stormwater runoff.

For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event sampling and stream surveys, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report special topic article, which is posted on the VLAP website at <http://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/vlap/categories/publications.htm>, or contact the VLAP Coordinator.

➤ **Table 9 and Table 10: Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature Data**

Table 9 in Appendix B shows the dissolved oxygen/temperature profile(s) collected during **2010**. Table 10 in Appendix B shows the historical and current year dissolved oxygen concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer). The presence of sufficient amounts of dissolved oxygen in the water column is vital to fish and amphibians and bottom-dwelling organisms. Please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The dissolved oxygen concentration was **high** at all deep spot depths sampled in the pond on the **August** sampling event. Typically, shallow lakes and ponds that are not deep enough to stratify into more than one or two thermal layers will have relatively high amounts of oxygen at all depths. This is due to continual lake mixing and diffusion of oxygen into the bottom waters induced by wind and wave action.

The dissolved oxygen concentration was **greater than 100 percent** saturation throughout the water column on the **August** sampling event. However, the extremely high dissolved oxygen and percent saturation levels indicate a potential malfunction of the dissolved oxygen meter. Or, layers of algae can increase the dissolved oxygen concentration in the water column since oxygen is a by-product of photosynthesis. Wave action from wind can also dissolve atmospheric oxygen into the upper layers of the water column.

➤ **Table 11: Turbidity**

Table 11 in Appendix B lists the current year and historical data for in-lake and tributary turbidity. Turbidity in the water is caused by suspended matter, such as clay, silt, and algae. Water clarity is strongly influenced by turbidity. Please refer to the “Other Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

The tributary and deep spot turbidity was **relatively low** this year, which is good news.

However, we recommend that your group sample the pond and any surface water runoff areas during significant rain events to determine if stormwater runoff contributes turbidity and phosphorus to the pond.

For a detailed explanation on how to conduct rain event sampling, please refer to the 2002 VLAP Annual Report special topic article, which is posted on the VLAP website at

<http://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/vlap/categories/publications.htm>, or contact the VLAP Coordinator.

➤ **Table 12: Bacteria (*E.coli*)**

Table 12 in Appendix B lists the current year and historical data for bacteria (*E.coli*) testing. *E. coli* is a normal bacterium found in the large intestine of humans and other warm-blooded animals. *E.coli* is used as an indicator organism because it is easily cultured and its presence in the water, in defined amounts, indicates that sewage **may** be present. If sewage is present in the water, potentially harmful disease-causing organisms **may** also be present.

Bacteria sampling was not conducted this year. If residents are concerned about sources of bacteria such as failing septic systems, animal waste, or waterfowl waste, it is best to conduct *E. coli* testing when the water table is high, when beach use is heavy, or immediately after rain events.

➤ **Table 13: Chloride**

Table 13 in Appendix B lists the current year and the historical data for chloride sampling. The chloride ion (Cl⁻) is found naturally in some surfacewaters and groundwaters and in high concentrations in seawater. Research has shown that elevated chloride levels can be toxic to freshwater aquatic life. In order to protect freshwater aquatic life in New Hampshire, the state has adopted **acute and chronic** chloride criteria of **860 and 230 mg/L** respectively. The chloride content in New Hampshire lakes is naturally low, generally less than 2 mg/L in surface waters located in remote areas away from habitation. Higher values are generally associated with salted highways and, to a lesser extent, with septic inputs. Please refer to the “Chemical Monitoring Parameters” section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

Chloride sampling was **not** conducted during **2010**.

➤ **Table 14: Current Year Biological and Chemical Raw Data**

Table 14 in Appendix B lists the most current sampling year results. Since the maximum, minimum, and annual mean values for each parameter are not shown on this table, this table displays the current year “raw,” meaning unprocessed, data. The results are sorted by station, depth, and then parameter.

➤ **Table 15: Station Table**

As of the spring of 2004, all historical and current year VLAP data are included in the DES Environmental Monitoring Database (EMD). To facilitate the transfer of VLAP data into the EMD, a new station identification system had to be developed. While volunteer monitoring groups can still use the sampling station names that they have used in the past and are most familiar with, an EMD station name also exists for each VLAP sampling location. Table 15 in Appendix B identifies what EMD station name corresponds to the station names you have used in the past and will continue to use in the future.

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL

Annual Assessment Audit:

During the annual visit to your pond, the biologist conducted a sampling procedures assessment audit for your monitoring group. Specifically, the biologist observed the performance of your monitoring group and completed an assessment audit sheet to document the volunteer monitors’ ability to follow the proper field sampling procedures, as outlined in the VLAP Monitor’s Field Manual. This assessment is used to identify any aspects of sample collection in which volunteer monitors failed to follow proper procedures, and also provides an opportunity for the biologist to retrain the volunteer monitors as necessary. This will ultimately ensure samples that the volunteer monitors collect are truly representative of actual lake and tributary conditions.

Overall, your monitoring group did an **excellent** job collecting samples on the annual biologist visit this year! Specifically, the members of your monitoring group followed the proper field sampling procedures and there was no need for the biologist to provide additional training. Keep up the good work!

USEFUL RESOURCES

Best Management Practices to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution: A Guide for Citizens and Town Officials, DES Booklet WD-03-42, (603) 271-2975 or

www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/publications/wd/documents/wd-03-42.pdf.

Lake or Pond – What is the Difference? DES fact sheet WD-BB-49, (603) 271-2975 or

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-49.pdf>

Lake Protection Tips: Some Do's and Don'ts for Maintaining Healthy Lakes, DES fact sheet WD-BB-9, (603) 271-2975 or

www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-9.pdf.

NH Stormwater Management Manual Volume 1: Stormwater and Antidegradation, DES fact sheet WD-08-20A, (603) 271-2975 or

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/publications/wd/documents/wd-08-20a.pdf>

NH Stormwater Management Manual Volume 2: Post-Construction Best Management Practices Selection and Design, DES fact sheet WD-08-20B, (603) 271-2975 or

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/publications/wd/documents/wd-08-20b.pdf>

NH Stormwater Management Manual Volume 3: Erosion and Sediment Controls During Construction, DES fact sheet WD-08-20C, (603) 271-2975 or

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/publications/wd/documents/wd-08-20c.pdf>

Road Salt and Water Quality, DES fact sheet WD-WMB-4, (603) 271-2975 or

www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/wmb/documents/wmb-4.pdf.

Sand Dumping - Beach Construction, DES fact sheet WD-BB-15, (603) 271-2975 or

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-15.pdf>.